

A₄ 10:1 to 40:1, or a silica content of at least 10% by weight. The invention further relates to a process for the production of silica-based particles comprising the steps of: (a) acidifying an aqueous silicate solution to a pH of from 1 to 4 to form an acid sol; (b) alkalisating the acid sol at an SiO₂ content within the range of from 4.5 to 8% by weight to; (c) allowing particle growth of the alkalisated sol for at least 10 minutes, or heat-treating the alkalisated sol at a temperature of at least 30°C; and then (d) alkalisating the obtained sol to a pH of at least 10.0. The invention further relates to silica-based particles obtainable by the process, the use of the silica-based particles as drainage and retention aids in the production of paper as well as a process for the production of paper from an aqueous suspension containing cellulosic fibres, and optional filler, in which silica-based particles and at least one charged organic polymer are added to the cellulosic suspension.

Remarks

This preliminary amendment amends the specification, claims and abstract, and adds new claims without the addition of new matter thereby. A marked version showing the amendments is attached hereto. Presently, claims 1 and 22-40 are pending.

Early and favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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